Arizona Department Of Water Resources and Tohono Chul Park

XERISCAPE CONTEST

JUDGING CRITERIA

The overall intent of the program is to recognize landscape projects that have successfully integrated the principles of Xeriscape with high-quality landscape design, construction and maintenance. A major focus of the contest is water use efficiency and effective use of native and drought tolerant plants. The following criteria will be used to evaluate each project:

1. Does the design meet high-quality aesthetic standards while achieving low water use through appropriate plant material selection, use of zone planting, mini-oasis, and other Xeriscape concepts?

2. Are water-harvesting techniques incorporated into the design? Is graywater utilized for irrigation? Does the site have storage for captured rainwater or graywater? If so, has the applicant provided an estimate of annual water savings?

3. Are plant materials native to the Sonoran and/or Chihuahuan deserts or, low-water-use species? If higher-water-consumption plants are used (mini-oasis), is there a conscious use of zone planting, a planned irrigation system, and/or water-harvesting techniques and a design that still results in low water consumption?

4. Is the landscape designed to attract wildlife?

5. Is the landscape a re-vegetation of disturbed desert? Or, a retrofit of a high-water-using landscape?

6. Is the irrigation system, if used, properly designed and installed? Is the system manual or automatic?

7. Has the owner or applicant provided evidence of efficient irrigation (seasonal irrigation and maintenance schedules based on seasonal variability, evapotranspiration (Et_o), micro-climates, or maturity of the landscape) and written guidelines on maintenance of water harvesting or graywater-reuse features?

8. Has the design compensated for water features, if present (e.g. fountains, spas, pools) through increased use of hardscape (paved patios and walkways), rainwater harvesting, graywater reuse, low-water-use plants, rather than oasis plants and grass? Are there other high-water-use features, (e.g., outdoor misting systems)?

9. Does the design and installation minimize maintenance requirements? Does the landscape blend effectively with the natural environment? Are planting techniques correct for adverse site conditions (e.g. slopes are protected from erosion, any adverse conditions are addressed)?

10. Does the design and finished project satisfy the functional needs of the user (e.g. resident, office employee, visiting public) while creating an aesthetically pleasing and efficient low-water-use project?

11. Has the contest applicant completed the "volume based water audit" worksheet (mandatory for professional entries that want to be considered for a special Water Conservation Award, optional for homeowners)? Have homeowners completed their monthly water-use worksheet?